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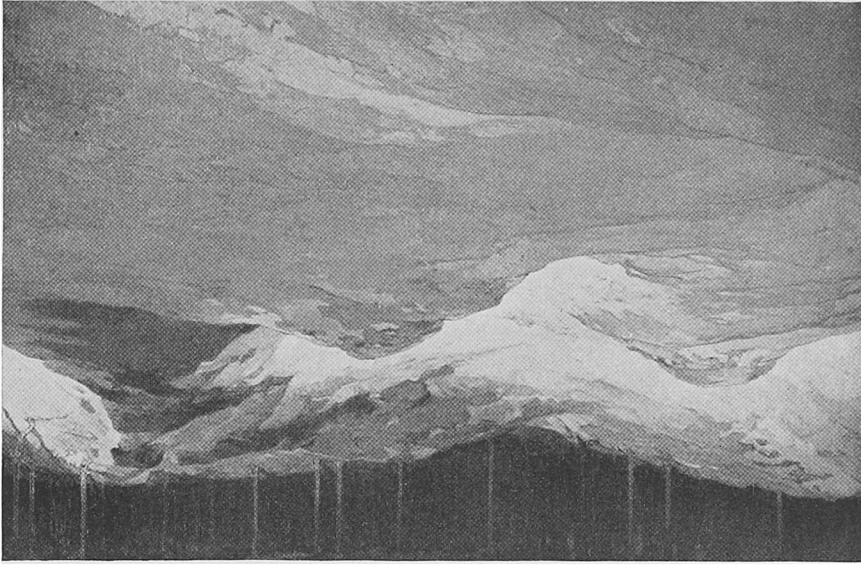
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THE EDGE OF THE FOREST  
By Charles H. Woodbury

#### SIDELIGHT ON JOHN S. SARGENT.

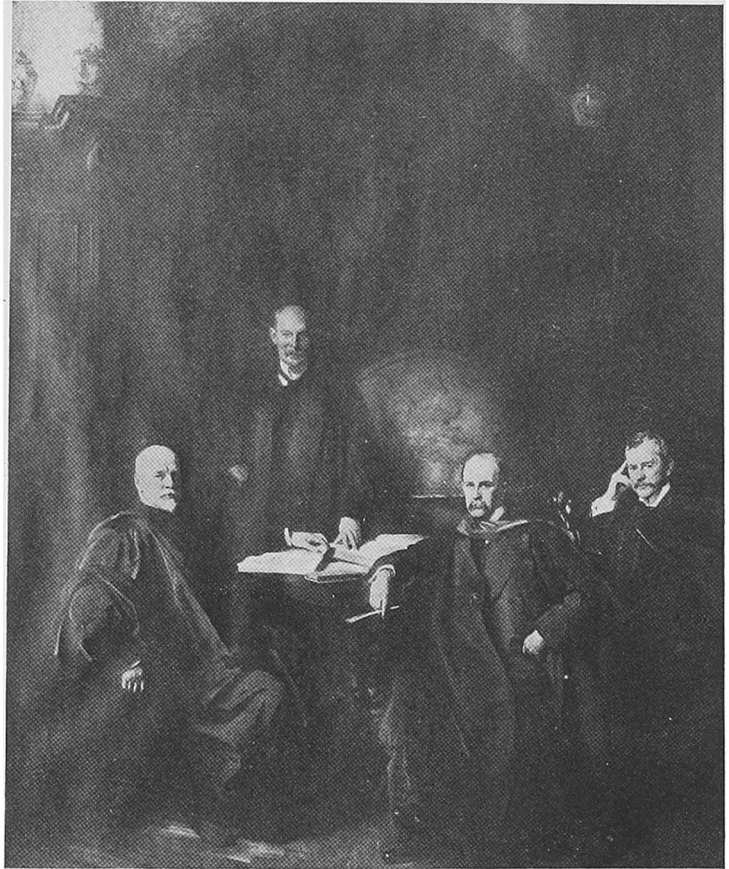
As one of the sitters for Sargent's notable portrait group at the recent exhibition at the Corcoran Art Gallery, Washington, I can give the readers of *BRUSH AND PENCIL* a possibly acceptable sidelight on that distinguished painter's methods. Dr. Kelly was the first arrival at the studio, and during the next three sittings Sargent indiscriminately called us all "Dr. Kelly."

The first sitting was taken up with trial groupings; the following ones singly and in pairs. The artist talked incessantly of everything and smoked cigarettes continually while he worked. The boldness and accuracy of his work conveys the impression that he sits steadily at his easel. This, however, is not the case. He walked back and forth, talking and smoking, but when at the picture his brush work was rapid and precise. At one of our group sittings he seemed in despair, saying: "You all seem so much alike—four white dots on a canvas. It is not a picture." With that he approached the canvas and passed the brush rapidly before it.

"I have it!" he exclaimed. "There is a big Venetian globe in my other studio. If there are no objections, on medical grounds, it will make the portrait a picture." I replied that there were no objections to its introduction; in fact, I thought it would be symbolic of Dr. Osler's fame—encircling the earth. At the first regrouping with the globe present Sargent exclaimed, "It is just what was needed."

It is interesting to read the criticisms of the picture—especially those that appeared in the London papers—in the light of our more intimate

knowledge of its original conception. For instance, the critics said that the first intention was to make it an oblong, and that a change in the original design necessitated piecing the canvas at the top. That, in short, before its beginning it had not been conceived as a whole. This



DRS. WELCH, OSLER, HALSTED AND KELLY  
By John S. Sargent

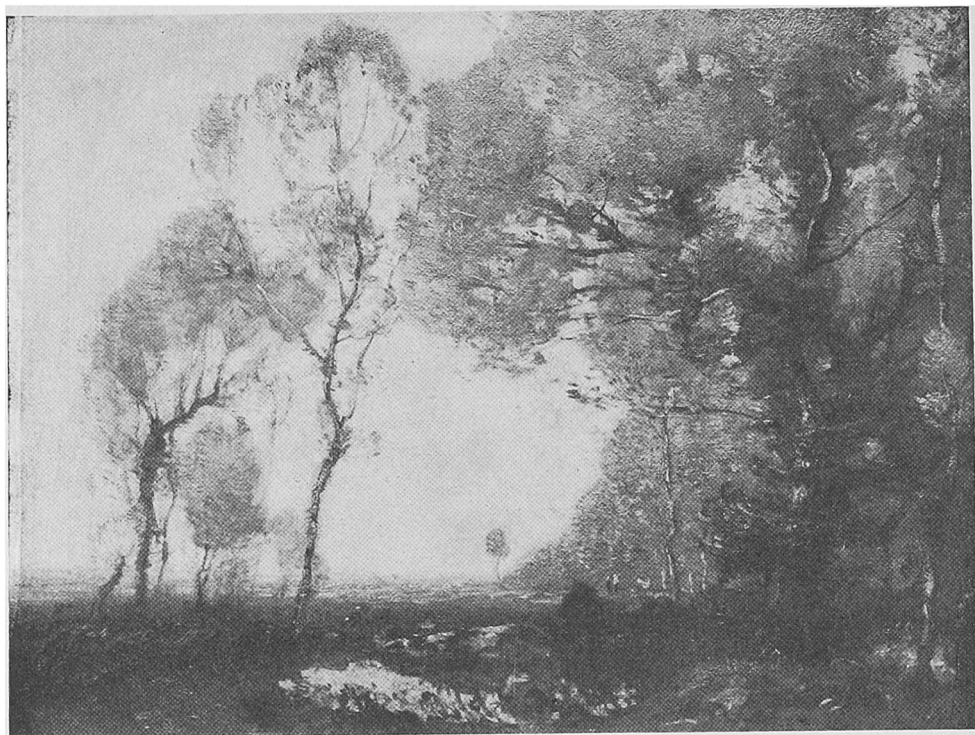
is incorrect. The picture was conceived as it now stands, with the impression of space above the figures, and piecing the canvas was merely incidental—a large enough one not being at hand. In fact, Sargent told us this at the first sitting. Another misleading comment was that the picture was distinctly a group of three, the figure of Dr. Kelly being too far to the right to be properly a part of the group. This was certainly not Sargent's intention—the picture itself refutes the comment.

We each averaged two sittings a week, which owing to the artist's



CARITAS  
By Abbott H. Thayer

press of work, he was frequently getting mixed with the sittings of others, one of whom was Lord Roberts, who broke in on us several times. Dr. Osler gave the artist the most trouble. Sargent complained frequently that Osler was "fidgety." My head he painted on a single impression. The present portrait of Dr. Osler is the third attempt. He did not attempt to "niggle" the first two into acceptability, but rubbed them out each time. This reminds me of the following incident:



WILLOWS  
By H. W. Ranger

I had expressed my delight at a certain picture of Gainsborough's. Sargent said: "Now, there's a man: he did not attempt to tease a mistake into an acceptable picture, as Reynolds did, but let it go honestly as a bad job. Reynolds was never great enough to do this." That Sargent's method leans toward Gainsborough's this will serve to illustrate.

While in Paris I met a friend of Sargent's who, on learning that I was to sit for him, told me that I would have an opportunity to see a picture the artist was working on, which, in my friend's estimate, was a masterpiece. When, expecting a great treat, I asked Sargent to show it to me, he replied: "Oh, I rubbed that out."

Note—For other examples of work by Corcoran Gallery Exhibitors, see following pages.

Sargent's affability and unaffected simplicity are engaging, and his broad interests make him an interesting talker. He lent to simple incidents of the street the same penetration and humor that attended his remarks on art. At the time of our sittings he was anxious to finish his work in London and get to Syria in order to make sketches for his unfinished decorations of the Boston Public Library, which seemed to have become a great burden on his conscience. Contrary to the general impression that Sargent is difficult to sit for, I never while before him felt that I was being scrutinized.

DR. WILLIAM H. WELCH.



### STILL THE HOI POLLOI, BON TON AND METROPOLITAN ARE DAFT ON EUROPEAN ART.

The earnestness of the art students in America is one of the greatest reasons why they are successful. They are not lazy. They are—well—they are “all alive.” Do you remember Jules Verne's story of “Dr. Ox?” And how, when under the influence of the vivifying oxygen the characters went about doing things with greater energy than they had ever shown before, singing an entire opera in forty-five minutes and fairly outracing time? The work of the art students here reminds me of that story. So does the work of everybody else in America.

The art students are no more earnest, no more alive than other students. It doesn't seem to matter whether they were born here or in Europe. They come from the other side, where they have never shown much energy, and as soon as they get here they go to work. I can't understand it unless the air here is different and they are influenced after reaching America by the change of atmosphere, as the characters were in the story.

American “all-aliveness” aside and speaking seriously, the American capacity to excel artistically is remarkable. The American temperament is essentially creative. The subduing of a vast new continent has forced the American to be creative. In the past he has been obliged to concentrate largely on such material things as the building of railroads and bridges, the opening and developing of mines, the evolution of a new agriculture and making of utilitarian inventions and all that.

So long as these things absorbed the major part of the country's financial resources it was not possible to devote the attention to the fine arts here that they receive in older lands. But now that the country has accumulated the necessary capital an unprecedented growth of artistic feeling is taking place and there is abundant artistic production in every form.

It is not true that “American materialism” is detrimental from an artistic standpoint. Such an idea is absurd. The getting together of immense fortunes is essential to the proper development of art and every phase of the higher civilization. You can not have pictures or statuary or handsome buildings or fine park systems or beautiful streets if you are without the money to pay for them. That is self-evident.

The art treasures to be seen in European cities have cost immense